

EV  
-Z 269

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



Canada

### WHO WE ARE

At Secretary of State we are concerned with people. Our programs and activities are aimed at promoting knowledge of our country, and pride in its cultures, history and traditions. Our work touches almost everyone who lives in Canada: people pursuing education goals; desiring citizenship; people wishing to exercise their official language rights; striving to retain racial and cultural identities in our multicultural society; people wishing to maintain and exercise their human rights and freedoms; people with disabilities striving to overcome our society's barriers; young people wanting to broaden their knowledge of Canada; people in voluntary groups seeking to make a contribution to their community and their country.

We've been in business for a long time; in fact the Department of the Secretary of State is only a year younger than Canada itself. It was established in 1868 as the official channel of communication between the new Dominion of Canada and the Imperial government in the United Kingdom. The first Secretary of State was Hector-Louis Langevin, one of the Fathers of Confederation.

Since the early days, the department has grown and changed, just as Canada itself has and today, many of our areas of concern are reflected in the new Constitution Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Here are some facts about what we do.

### EDUCATION SUPPORT

One of the most important responsibilities of the Secretary of State is to help Canadians continue their education beyond the secondary or high school level.



We provide assistance to universities, community colleges and other educational institutions to meet the needs of a growing post-secondary student population.

Since 1977, this support has been in the form of annual tax transfers and cash payments to the provincial and territorial governments. In 1983 this sum was set at approximately \$3.6 billion.

We also help financially needy full-time students at the post-secondary level. Since the introduction of the Canada Student Loans Program in 1964, almost one third of enrolled students have been provided with interest-free loans to help them pay for their post-secondary education.

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

One of the things that makes Canada special is that it has two official languages, English and French. Secretary of State has a major responsibility to help Canadians exercise their rights concerning their own official language and, if they wish, to learn their second official language.

Through the Official Language Communities Program,

we help Francophones in provinces outside Quebec, and Anglophones in Quebec, to preserve their language and cultural identity within their communities and the larger Canadian family.

We give financial assistance to the provincial and territorial governments to increase opportunities for Canadians to learn their second official language and for members of the official language minority groups to be educated in their mother tongue. Through provincial departments of education, direct assistance is provided (in the form of bursaries and fellowships) to post-secondary students pursuing official language studies and to both second and minority official language teachers who wish to improve their skills.

Support is also provided to the provincial governments for language training centres and minority language teacher training institutions, as well as for special developmental or experimental projects in official languages in education.

To provincial, territorial, municipal and school board administrations, we offer consultative services and technical aid in terminology, translation and second-language training to help increase their ability to serve the public in both official languages. We also encourage business, industry and voluntary associations to use both French and English in their activities.

We're responsible for helping the Parliament of Canada and departments and agencies of the Government of Canada to communicate effectively in both official languages as well as in Native and foreign languages. In addition to providing translation and interpretation services, we direct an internationally recognized linguistic and terminological centre served by an advanced computerized terminology bank. We thus provide valuable assistance to the entire federal public service and, indirectly, to the Canadian public.

### YOUTH

Secretary of State's services to youth include exchange and community service programs through which young people may develop as caring, participating citizens while discovering and gaining a greater appreciation and knowledge of Canada. Open House Canada is a program of structured educational exchange in which groups of young Canadians aged 14 to 22 make reciprocal visits. It gives them the opportunity to make friends while discovering other regions, living with families that sometimes

have different cultural backgrounds from their own. Katimavik is a program of voluntary service in which participants from across Canada join teams that carry out three successive three-month projects, each in a different province. It gives them an opportunity to learn, grow and experience the give and take of living and working as a team.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

Secretary of State has a central responsibility for the Canadian government's domestic human rights interests. We work with the public and provincial and federal government departments in monitoring human rights and developing further policy recommendations. We are responsible for the preparation of Canada's reports to the United Nations on the status of our human rights, and we play a part in presenting Canada's views to international bodies.

We work with non-governmental organizations to promote better human rights policy, research, education and training in both the public and private sectors.

We also give financial aid to a wide range of organizations to assist their efforts to promote and protect human rights.

### DISABLED PERSONS

The Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat supports the Secretary of State in his capacity of Minister Responsible for the Status of Disabled Persons. The secretariat does not fund groups but promotes, facilitates and co-ordinates initiatives aiming at equality and full participation of disabled persons in Canadian society. The secretariat works with all levels of government, the private sector, organizations of and for disabled persons and international organizations.

### CITIZENSHIP

We help people to become citizens, or to acquire proof that they are already Canadian citizens. We are responsible for the Citizenship Act; rewritten in 1977, it is considered one of the fairest and most progressive in the world.

Our citizenship courts and offices provide services in 30 permanent locations and many more circuit stops across Canada.

We are responsible for helping Canadians become more aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to use this awareness to build a better country together. The Citizens' Participation Programs, for example, encourage Canadians to take an active part in improving community life by supporting voluntary organizations, including those providing help for groups working to improve the status of women, and the handicapped.

The Native Citizen's Directorate helps Native people identify their needs and develop the means to deal with them. We provide assistance to national and regional organizations, to Native women and Native people moving into urban areas.

### MULTICULTURALISM

The Government of Canada recognizes that Canadians are people of many races and cultures. Our multiculturalism policy applies to all residents of Canada. Through Multiculturalism Canada we encourage Canada's many ethnocultural groups to participate fully in the mainstream of society, while preserving their cultural heritage and sharing it with others. Projects that increase understanding between Canadians of different races and cultural backgrounds, and support the development of their culture

in the Canadian context, are just two examples of the kinds of ventures we encourage.

### SYMBOLS AND CEREMONIES

One of the department's original and continuing responsibilities is for organizing and managing state ceremonies and special events of national significance, including visits by members of the Royal Family, state funerals and special national celebrations such as Canada's birthday. We are responsible for advising the Government of Canada on rules that govern ceremonial and state occasions. Among the most important of our jobs is to inform Canadians about such symbols as our flag, Coat of Arms and national anthem.

### CAN WE HELP YOU?

If you would like further information about what we do or how we can help you, don't hesitate to contact us by writing or telephoning our office nearest you, listed in the blue or black-edged pages of most telephone directories, or:

Communications Directorate  
Department of the Secretary of State  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0M5  
Telephone: (819) 997-0055

